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ABSTRACT

This document is the print component of the two-hour teleconference "Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole." Produced by South Carolina ETV, the program is aimed at state legislators to help them develop policies and practices for meeting the needs of America's youth. This document is also a part of "Realizing America's Hope," a multivideo and print project sponsored by General Motors, the Lilly Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Metropolitan Life Foundation. The current system of fragmented services for youth has reached the limit of its effectiveness. The states are in the best position to design a focused effort to address service delivery needs. A clearly helpful strategy is to design a policy environment fostering an interagency approach. Examples of coordinated services are given for the following states: (1) California; (2) Washington; (3) New Jersey; and (4) Kentucky. Components of effective policy include the following: (1) putting children at the center of policy; (2) forming partnerships between states and communities; (3) proposing integrated comprehensive policies; (4) exploring alternative structures; (5) emphasizing health care and education for families of young children; and (6) discontinuing policies and practices that place children at risk. Meeting the needs of children requires changing the ways that society thinks about delivering services. A 17-item list of related readings is given, and the video and print components of "Realizing America's Hope" are listed. (SLD)

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CHANGING DELIVERY SYSTEMS: ADDRESSING THE FRAGMENTATION IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE

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CHANGING DELIVERY SYSTEMS: ADDRESSING THE FRAGMENTATION IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

A Companion Publication for
Investing in Our Youth:
A Nationwide Committee of the Whole

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PREFACE

Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation in Children and Youth Services is the print component to the two-hour teleconference, **Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole**. Produced by South Carolina ETV and co-hosted by the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Education Commission of the States, the program is aimed at members of state legislatures, especially those involved in the oversight of education, human services and juvenile justice, to help them develop policies and encourage more effective and efficient practices for meeting the needs of America's youth.

Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation in Children and Youth Services describes collaborative strategies state agencies can use to improve youth services and stretch limited fiscal resources. The examples cited in this booklet demonstrate the importance of creating a framework that puts youth at the center and includes examples of agencies that have stepped over traditional bureaucratic boundaries to create improved delivery systems.

The agencies co-authoring *Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation in Children and Youth Services* are the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Created in 1965, ECS is an interstate compact that helps state leaders improve the quality of education. ECS conducts policy research, surveys and special studies; maintains an information clearinghouse; organizes state, regional and national forums; provides technical assistance to states; and fosters nationwide leadership and cooperation. ECS priority issues include embracing diversity, transforming teaching and learning and promoting system change.

The National Conference of State Legislatures serves legislators and their staffs from the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. NCSL is a nonpartisan organization with three objectives: to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures; to foster interstate communication and cooperation; and to ensure states a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation in Children and Youth Services and **Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole** are part of

REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE, a comprehensive initiative to help America respond to the challenges facing its youth. This project is being funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the General Motors Corporation, the Lilly Endowment Inc. and the Metropolitan Life Foundation.

This multi-video and print project debuted in January with two powerful prime time specials—**All Our Children with Bill Moyers** and **Responding to 'All Our Children'— Bill Moyers Live from Longstreet Theatre.** Then airing in February along with the teleconference for legislators was **Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance**. This 60-minute closed-circuit teleconference looked at the need to draw families and businesses into the guidance process. For information on how to obtain copies of these other productions and their companion print materials, see page 11.

Other organizations cooperating in this project along with the Education Commission of the States and the National Conference of State Legislatures include MDC, Inc., the Public Television Outreach Alliance and the National Media Outreach Center.

INTRODUCTION

It is a myth that most American youth can muddle through adolescence and become productive adults largely on their own. Very few do. Further, more and more are finding their paths blocked by enormous social and economic barriers. To provide effective services for these youth, public policy-makers need to make radical and rapid changes in the way public agencies assist young people. Presently, there is a hodgepodge of agencies operating independently in a hit-and-miss fashion. Sometimes, agencies adequately serve several aspects of a child or family's needs. More often, however, they are able to meet one of the child's needs for a short time and then release the individual and/or family from the assistance program. The current system of fragmented services for youth has reached the limit of its effectiveness, and, even at its peak, such a system fails to meet the complex needs of today's youth.

The statistics paint a grim picture for young people.

- If a child is born to a single mother, chances are one in two that she or he will live in poverty. Further, if a teen happens to be a parent, chances are 70 percent that she or he will live in poverty. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

- Poverty statistics also vary by age groups. Nearly 25 percent of children under six live in poverty. In fact, children under six are more likely to be poor than any other age group. (National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990)

- In the U.S., between nine and 12 million American children have no health insurance. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

- Due to the abuse of alcohol by their mothers, every year about 40,000 children are born with alcohol-related birth defects, such as attention disorders, hyperactivity, speech-language disorders and the most serious disorder, fetal alcohol syndrome. (Newman, 1990)

- For every 1,000 infants born alive in the U.S., 13 will not live to see their fifth birthday. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

- About 1,000 young people attempt suicide every day. (United Way of America, 1990)

"The current system of fragmented services for youth has reached the limit of its effectiveness, and, even at its peak, such a system fails to meet the complex needs of today's youth."

- Other children live with the threat of violence on a daily basis, partially because 135,000 children bring guns to school every day. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

- One in every four homeless Americans in our cities is a child. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

- The dropout rate is equally alarming. Every day, 1,512 youngsters drop out of school. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

- Of those who stay in school, studies show half graduate without reading, math and science skills that would allow them to perform moderately complex tasks, such as summarizing a newspaper editorial or calculating decimals. (Children's Defense Fund, 1990)

Taken together, these and other circumstances place children and their families in at least difficult and often impossible situations. The following story illustrates the inter-relatedness of the problems facing youth.

Johnny, seven years old, is behind his fellow first-graders in reading and other activities. He often is late to school; his mother works nights and sometimes does not get up in time to get him off to school. There are few books in Johnny's home, and his mother, a single-parent dropout from the ninth grade, views the school system with a sense of powerlessness and mistrust. She provides for Johnny the best she can, but she knows the ten-year-old trailer they rent is drafty and is one reason that Johnny has frequent colds and a constantly runny nose.

Johnny's teacher likes the well-behaved but quiet youngster and tries to give him some extra attention in class but feels that he is likely to drop out in the years ahead. There are a number of social and community agencies, only a bus trip away from their home, that offer services to families like theirs, but Johnny's mother has grown weary of being placed on waiting lists. She's tired of being referred and then told she doesn't meet eligibility standards, being informed that what she wants is not what the agency provides, and being offered a substitute service she does not see as meeting her or Johnny's needs. (Bruner, 1990)

In this complex and changing environment, the U.S. can no longer afford to waste the potential of even one child. In 1990 and beyond, three out of every four jobs will require education or technical training beyond high school. Projections for the year 2000 are that new jobs will require a work force whose median level of education is 13.5 years. Human capital is quickly becoming a vital asset every corporation must possess. As one research group states, It is an asset vital to the survival of our families, our communities, and the future of our democracy.

No single agency or organization or sector can understand, much less ameliorate, our pressing social problems by itself. Inspired, in part, by developments around the world, we must ask again: How do we ensure that all Americans, not just an elite few, develop to their potential and share the responsibilities and the benefits of our nation's future?

Since 1980, with the federal decision to hold spending in these areas at constant dollar amounts, state and local governments have been called on to increase their commitment to youth at risk. States and localities have undertaken this assignment to varying degrees. The new role of the federal government is best exemplified by the Family Support Act (FSA) of 1988. This legislation encourages individual self-sufficiency by forming key partnerships among education, employment training, health, public welfare and other agencies. The FSA is a turning point in the relationship between federal, state and local service agencies. Although this legislation represents an important first step, other service areas for youth must undergo intense review.

It is at the state level that the strategies for vulnerable youth come together on their way from the federal government to local agencies. Consequently, the states are in the best position to design a focused effort to address the needs of young people. Clearly, the current system of service delivery is insufficient. For example, although California attempts to serve children and youth through more than 160 publicly funded programs in 35 agencies and seven departments, children and families continue to fall between the cracks of various administrative definitions of 'the problem,' bringing costly redundancy at a time of general underservice, say Michael Kirst and Milbrey McLaughlin of Stanford University. California is not alone. In Dayton, Ohio, city leaders were surprised to find out that excluding the schools, $50 million was being spent by literally dozens of different

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agencies dedicated to serving about 5,000 at-risk youth. That equals about $10,000 per child. Baltimore, Maryland, found 300 probation, mental health, welfare and other agency counselors working primarily with the same families and youth.

A conservative estimate of the non-education *public* youth-serving agencies in this country puts the total at more than 21,000. These include health, human services and justice agencies. Combine their activities with the $200 billion spent annually on elementary and secondary education, mostly by approximately 16,000 operating local school districts, and a picture of a vast but fragmented and inefficient infrastructure emerges.

For managers of the state system, governors, legislators and agency chiefs, one clear strategy is designing a policy environment that fosters an interagency approach to delivering youth services. In developing policies that encourage this collaboration, policy-makers, however, must be cautious. Efforts to bring about collaboration often fall short of their goals because they lack an overall policy framework that puts youth at the center. Charles Bruner describes the purpose of interagency collaboration this way, 'Collaboration' is a process to obtain goals that cannot be obtained singly .... As a process, collaboration is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Effectively meeting the needs of young people in the most efficient way possible should always be the goal of any collaborative effort.

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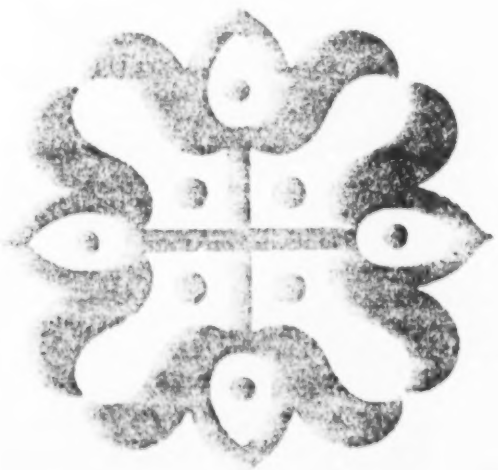
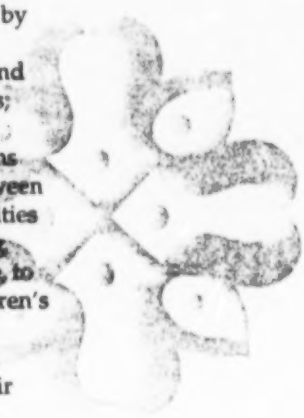


EXAMPLES OF COORDINATED SERVICES

In some states, political and community leaders have already begun the intricate task of coordinating services for youth. The following examples illustrate the advantages of agency collaboration.

CALIFORNIA

In 1985, San Bernardino County, California, created the Children's Network. The purpose of the network is to provide comprehensive community services to children and youth by focusing on the following: improving communications, planning, coordination and cooperation among youth-serving agencies; identifying gaps and overlaps in services; providing a forum for clarifying perceptions and expectations among agencies and between agencies and the community; setting priorities for interagency projects; and implementing collaborative programs, public and private, to better serve children and youth. The Children's Network has combined agency and peer linkages that cross hierarchical lines with committed political leadership to meet their objectives.



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There are several work groups in the Children's Network. For example, the department chiefs of each county agency constitute the Children's Policy Council, and work to provide leadership in the development of comprehensive community services to children and youth. There are five other work groups in the Children's Network, representing over 60 public and private organizations. Representatives from these organizations meet regularly to share information, increase awareness of problems facing children and youth, evaluate program services to determine effectiveness, establish ways to reduce red tape, solicit help from both the public and private sectors and develop legislative proposals to improve children's services in the county.

"The Children's Network has combined agency and peer linkages that cross hierarchical lines with committed political leadership to meet their objectives."

WASHINGTON STATE

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) began in 1985 in response to a report produced by the Washington Roundtable, a group of top prominent business leaders. The Department of Community Development was chosen as the lead agency because of its experience in delivering a wide range of services to communities. ECEAP is modeled after the federal Head Start program that prepares low-income four-year-olds for school. This early intervention approach serves the whole child, looking not only at the

child's educational, health and social service needs but also at her or his place in the family and community. Other state agencies involved in the program are Education; Social and Health Services; Trade and Economic Development; and Employment Security.

Each ECEAP site is different depending on the needs of the community and the agency contracted to deliver the services. The program stresses the benefits of early investment for the child and the community.

NEW JERSEY

Challenged by then Governor Thomas Kean in 1987 to bring coherence to youth services, the New Jersey Department of Human Services developed the School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) to provide adolescents, especially those with problems, the opportunity to complete their education, to obtain skills that lead to employment or additional education, and to lead a mentally and physically healthy life. The program is a unique collaboration of schools and social service agencies which provide a "one-stop shopping" approach to the delivery of services for young people.

Each school-based site is designed to meet the needs of the individual community; however, all maintain five basic services: primary and preventive health care, mental health resources, employment counseling, tutorial help and recreation. The recreation component draws students into the program. Once they are comfortable, they can take advantage of the other available resources. Twenty-nine of these sites are in high schools and junior highs across the state.

KENTUCKY

In 1986, the Kentucky General Assembly established the Parent and Child Education (PACE) program in an effort to end the generational cycle of illiteracy. Originally designed as a two-year pilot program for parents without high school diplomas and their three- or four-year-old children in selected rural areas, PACE has expanded to serve both urban and rural residents.

Nearly 600 families have been enrolled in PACE since, and 70 percent of the adults have received GED certificates or raised their grade levels by at least two years. These results underscore the benefits of the program by improving children's

learning skills, increasing parental expectations for their children and raising the education and literacy levels of parents. As a part of this program, parents study adult education and life skills, while their children attend a model preschool program. PACE is unique in having parents and children learning together simultaneously in a school setting. It is hoped that the family's positive experience in a public school setting will result in more positive attitudes toward school which will benefit parents and, in turn, their children.

"We have to realize that these are all of our concerns. These are not parents' problems, kids' problems or the schools' problems. They are everyone's concern."

Fariba Pendleton
4-H Youth
Development Agent
Douglas County (Superior),
Wisconsin

COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE POLICY

In this rapidly changing world, policy-makers, community organizations, schools, parents and others who touch youths' lives must recognize and accept their shared responsibilities. Effective policy responses to problems of youth, and especially those who are most at risk, will:

- Put children and their families at the center of the policy framework. The central question is whether this policy contributes to an overall framework that encourages local agencies to provide effective services for families.

- Recognize that a partnership between state government, service workers, the community and the client's interests is necessary to provide effective services.

- Propose integrated, comprehensive policies for children instead of scattered policies that address only one segment of the population or one aspect of a person's circumstances.

- Explore alternative structures for state government to implement and coordinate children's services, such as a single cabinet-level agency for youth, restructuring legislative oversight and other independent accountability mechanisms.

- Include an emphasis on prenatal health care and health care and education readiness for families of young children ages zero to five. All three- and four-year-olds should have access to educational day care programs.

- Encourage schools and other local agencies that work directly with families and youth to identify and discontinue policies and practices that further place children at risk.

In states and communities across the nation, there are important steps to be taken. Consider actively pursuing one of the following:

- Make the public aware of the needs of youth and the danger that failing to meet those needs poses for the future of the community, state and nation.

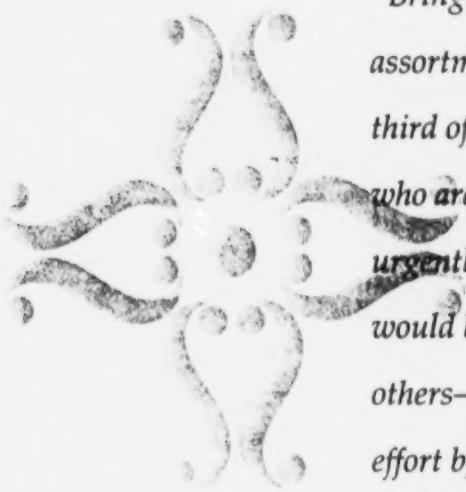
- Collect data on the circumstances of youth in your state. Develop strategies and set timelines to reach intermediate goals that will ameliorate these problems.

- Make sure existing federal, state and local efforts for youth in the community are catalogued and shared. Develop a system to share this information with schools, private industry, community organizations and families.

- Communicate high expectations for *all* children throughout your community. Parents, teachers, service workers and members of the neighborhood all have important roles to play. Consistent messages get noticed.

CONCLUSION

The existing system of providing services to children cannot accomplish much more for youth than it already has. Now is the time for youth-serving agencies, with the help of state and local governments, to develop collaborative efforts that address the inter-related problems youth face. It is time for different levels of service providers and different service sectors to work together to provide services to families. School and family services of the future must be tailored to meet family needs and must coordinate responses from the agencies involved. Bringing this vision to reality will require a shift in how society thinks about doing business and many hours of intense effort to work out the details. When will this happen in your community? Start today.



"Bringing together the assortment of services the third of our young people who are most at risk so urgently need—and that would be helpful to all others—requires a joint effort by all child- and youth-serving sectors."

from "What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Familes with Comprehensive Services"

RELATED READINGS

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REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE

VIDEO AND PRINT COMPONENTS

VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

All Our Children with Bill Moyers, produced by Public Affairs Television, 90 minutes. Moyers and his colleagues examine the efforts of several programs and schools across the country which are achieving small victories in the lives of those young people who have known defeat.

Responding to 'All Our Children' —Bill Moyers Live from Longstreet Theatre, produced by South Carolina ETV, 60 minutes. Representatives from education, business, government and the family engage in a lively discussion with journalist Bill Moyers in response to the challenges facing the nation's youth described in Moyers' documentary, **All Our Children with Bill Moyers**.

Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole, produced by South Carolina ETV, 120 minutes. This two-hour teleconference aimed at state legislators demonstrated how collaborative strategies are proving to be highly cost effective by cutting through bureaucratic red tape while serving clients more efficiently.

Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance, produced by South Carolina ETV, 60 minutes. This teleconference demonstrates how families, communities and businesses are being drawn into the school guidance process in order to better serve the nation's young people.

Investing in Our Youth, produced by South Carolina ETV, 30 minutes. Half-hour documentary edited from the case studies produced for the legislators' teleconference.

Making the American Dream Work for Our Children, produced by South Carolina ETV, 30 minutes. Half-hour documentary edited from the case studies used in the guidance teleconference, **Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance**.

PUBLICATIONS

Let's Do It Our Way: Working Together for Educational Excellence, by MDC, Inc. This handbook for everyone explains why it is important that all members of the community work with schools to educate young people and outlines step by step how to set up a collaborative.

Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation of Children and Youth Services, by the Education Commission of the States and the National Conference of State Legislatures. This work describes collaborative strategies state agencies can use to improve youth services and stretch limited fiscal dollars.

Guiding Youth to Success: What Schools and Communities Can Do, by MDC, Inc. Examples of successful collaboratives are combined with a step-by-step approach to creating a collaborative to meet the needs of your own school.

For copies of these productions or publications, contact:

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